

METHOD OF HANDOVER IN MULTIMODE TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION:

5 1. Field of the Invention:

The invention is in the field of mobile telecommunications, and more specifically, it relates to a method of handover, that is intercellular transfer, in a multimode mobile telecommunication network in which, to initiate a handover, the network sends to a mobile terminal a first group of system information via a
10 first channel associated with circuit switching services and a second group of system information via a second channel associated with packet switching services.

More particularly, the invention is applied to a GSM (Global System for Mobile communication)/GPRS (General Packet Service)-UMTS (Universal
15 Mobile Telephone service) dual mode terminal in a multimode network comprising GSM/GPRS cells and UMTS cells.

2. Description of the Related Art:

In a cellular network, a mobile terminal is connected to a particular cell of the network, which will be referred to as current cell in this description below.

20 To prepare for a handover, the network has to present the mobile terminal with a list of the neighboring cells in which the access technology is the same as the one implemented in the current cell, and also of the cells in which a different access technology is implemented.

The technical specifications of 3GPP (Third Generation Partnership
25 Project) define for the GSM standard a unidirectional logical control channel on

the downlink BCCH (Broadcast Control Channel) for sending the mobile terminal system information being broadcast in a cell.

This system information is called SYSTEM INFORMATION TYPE 2 (SI2) in circuit switching networks and SYSTEM INFORMATION TYPE 5 (SI5) in packet switching networks.

With the introduction of GPRS, a new unidirectional logical control channel on the downlink PBCCH (Packet Broadcast Control Channel) was defined to send to the mobile terminal various types of system information being broadcast in a cell. This system information contains among other things a list of frequencies of the neighboring cells in which measurements have to be performed.

In the prior art, when the terminal establishes communication with the network, a dedicated channel SDCCH (Slow Dedicated Control Channel) is allocated to the sending of system information.

However, a delay required for sending this information is relatively long (3 to 4 seconds). Consequently, success of a procedure of handover may be compromised since this procedure has to be achieved within a shorter delay especially in the case of saturation of the current cell.

This problem becomes aggravated by the fact that the current specifications of the 3GPP standard do not provide a procedure that permits the mobile terminal to send to the network the results of measurements performed on the basis of system information transmitted over an available PBCCH channel.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION:

The object of the invention is to alleviate the disadvantages of the prior

art described above.

The invention proposes a method of handover (i.e., intercellular transfer) in a multimode mobile telecommunication network in which, to initiate a handover, the network sends to a mobile terminal a first group of system information via a circuit switching channel and a second group of system information via a packet switching channel. The circuit switching channel is a channel associated with circuit switching services and the packet switching channel is a channel associated with packet switching services.

The method according to the invention comprises the steps of:

a) performing measurements at least in one neighboring cell on the basis of information contained in the second group of system information, b) sending the network the measurements performed in step a), and c) initiating the handover according to the measurements performed in step a).

In a particular application of the invention, the measurements are performed in a neighboring cell of circuit switching (CS) type.

Preferably, the invention is applied in a GSM/GPRS dual mode network and in a UMTS network. In this case, the first channel is BCCH channel and the second channel is PBCCH channel.

The invention also relates to a mobile terminal which performs measurements for preparing for a handover in a mobile telecommunication network. This measurements depend either on a first group of system information sent by the network to the mobile terminal via a circuit switching channel or on a second group of system information sent by the network to the mobile terminal via a packet switching channel.

The mobile terminal according to the invention further comprises:
means for performing measurements at least in one neighboring cell
on the basis of information contained in the second group of system information,
means for sending the network the measurements performed, and
5 means for initiating the procedure of handover according to the
measurements performed.

According to the present invention, the procedure of handover is
surely performed since the measurements performed in a neighboring cell on
the basis of the system information are rapidly sent to the network.

10 Other characteristics and advantages of the invention will be apparent
from the following description, made by way of non-limiting example, with
reference to accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS:

FIG. 1 is a view schematically illustrating the steps of the method
15 according to the invention, and

FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating the mobile terminal according to
the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS:

In order to disclose the invention, the following description relates to
20 an implementation of the method in a GSM/GPRS network in which a mobile
terminal MS (for mobile station) is located in a saturated cell of the GSM
network. Therefore, a procedure of handover regarding the mobile terminal
from the saturated cell towards a cell comprising sufficient radio resources for
continuing the communication has to be implemented. Measurements are
25 performed for identifying a neighboring cell having the sufficient radio resources.

FIG. 1 describes the various steps of this procedure by indicating with arrows various information exchanged among the mobile terminal (MS), a base station system (BSS) and a mobile switching center (MSC).

5 In a known manner, the BSS access network sends, as indicated by arrow 4, mobile terminal MS a first list of frequencies with regard to the cells to be measured via the BCCH channel and second list of frequencies with regard to the cells to be measured via the PBCCH channel.

To establish the communication, the terminal sends, as indicated by arrow 6, to the BSS a request for connection to the network.

10 Upon receiving this request, the BBS immediately allocates, as indicated by arrow 8, to the terminal a bidirectional transport channel SDCCH that conveys data from the user of the terminal and signaling information. The terminal then exchanges initialization messages (Initial MSG) with the BSS as indicated by arrows 10 and 12.

15 Contrary to the procedure of handover in the prior art, the terminal immediately sends, as indicated by arrows 14 to the BSS GPRS measurements based on the system information sent via the PBCCH without waiting for the reception of the system information SI5 sent via the BCCH channel.

20 In the example shown in FIG. 1, the terminal sends six reports of measurements as indicated by arrows 14 before measurements are carried out on the basis of the messages SI5. Therefore, the network may prepare for the handover as indicated by arrow 16 on the basis of nine reports of measurements based on GPRS system information and GSM system information.

25 The procedure of handover is notably improved taking into

consideration the system information supplied to the terminal via the PBCCH to the extent that the decision to perform a handover is taken on the basis of nine measurement reports instead of three.

FIG. 2 shows an example of the mobile terminal according to the
5 invention.

Mobile terminal 30 is a used in a multimode mobile telecommunication network, and performs measurements for preparing for a handover in the network. The measurements depend either on a first group of system information sent by the network to mobile terminal 20 via a circuit switching
10 channel or on a second group of system information sent by the network to the mobile terminal 20 via a packet switching channel. The mobile terminal has antenna 22, RF signal processor 24 connected to antenna 22, measuring unit 26 for performing measurements at least in one neighboring cell on the basis of information contained in the second group of system information, sending unit
15 28 for sending to the network the measurements performed in measuring unit 26, handover unit 30 for initiating the procedure of handover according to the measurements performed in measuring unit 26, and phone unit 32 which realizes general functions of a cellular phone such as dialing and voice communication. Each of measuring unit 26, sending unit 28, handover unit 30
20 and phone unit 32 is connected to RF signal processor 24.

While a preferred embodiment of the present invention has been described using specific terms, such description is for illustrative purposes only, and it is to be understood that changes and variations may be made without departing from the spirit or scope of the following claims.